

ISLAM

Enjoy the journey while it lasts

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

After a long journey, the express train was approaching its destination. The view from the train indicated that the final station was near. Hundreds of passengers were filled with new life. Some were fastening their bedding; some were changing clothes; some were just peering expectantly out of the window. All were excited, eagerly awaiting their journey's end.

Suddenly, there was a violent thud. The express had collided with a train waiting in the yard. One can easily imagine what happened then: happiness suddenly turned to grief, and vibrant lives were faced with violent death; hope was transformed into despair. A story, which seemed to be heading for a happy ending, became a tragedy at the final moment.

So it is with life. Man strives to make himself comfortable in this world, to see his ambitions fulfilled and his life a successful one. But death comes just as his dreams are nearing completion. He leaves his lavish mansion for the desolation of the grave, his glistening body to be devoured by earth and worms. His life's labour vanishes without trace as if there was no connection between him and all that he had strived for on earth.

Visions of greatness had occupied his mind, but he is forced to enter the grave, and from there proceed to God's court of justice. This world is quite different from the one he had sought to construct for himself on earth. Here he is destitute, without money to fulfil his needs or clothes to hide his body. All his worldly earnings come to nothing. His friends desert him. He is left powerless, with nothing that he had depended on in the world to help him. Just as life's journey is nearing completion, it is struck by disaster. What a tragic outcome to such a long, arduous journey.

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This first appeared on 6 September 2015. The writer could not write this week due to unavoidable circumstances. His latest column will appear soon.